



**CITY OF HAMILTON**  
**COMMUNITY & EMERGENCY SERVICES DEPARTMENT**  
**Employment and Income Support Division**

<b>TO:</b>	Chair and Members Emergency & Community Services Committee
<b>COMMITTEE DATE:</b>	March 7, 2016
<b>SUBJECT/REPORT NO:</b>	Ontario Works Caseload Contingency Plan (CS09021(f)) (City Wide)
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	City Wide
<b>PREPARED BY:</b>	Kerry Lubrick 905-546-2424 Ext. 4855 Carole Zoghaib 905-546-2424 Ext. 7000
<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b>	Joe-Anne Priel General Manager Community & Emergency Services Department
<b>SIGNATURE:</b>	

**RECOMMENDATION**

That funding in the amount of \$1,770,480 gross/\$885,240 net be approved from the Ontario Works Stabilization Reserve #110044 to continue the 30 FTE Ontario Works Caseload Contingency Plan temporary staffing levels to December 31, 2016.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Ontario Works (OW) Caseload Contingency Plan was accepted and approved by Council in January 2009 (Report CS09021). There have been five reports since that time which included the hiring and retaining of additional staffing to support the increase in the OW caseload with the onset of the 2008 Recession. In total, 30 additional staff were hired with an end date of April 30, 2016. Funding for the OW contingency staff has been covered 50% by the province and 50% by the Ontario Works Stabilization Reserve.

The General Manager of Community and Emergency Services undertook an organizational and process review of the Ontario Works program in 2015 (Report CES15011). The purpose of this review was “to conduct a structure and process review that will result in the development and implementation of a sustainable organization structure, streamlined business processes and relevant resource alignment that will provide cost effective and efficient quality services while being responsive to the needs of Hamilton’s diverse Ontario Works, Ontario Disability and low-income clients and families.”

SHS Consulting was the successful proponent to complete the review and has recently submitted their recommendations to the General Manager. The results of the review will be submitted to the Emergency and Services Committee in Q2 2016.

Until the results of the review are implemented, it is recommended that current staffing levels be maintained including the 30 contingency staff.

***Alternatives for Consideration – Not Applicable***

**FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

**Financial:**

Approximately \$885,240 net is required to cover the cost of the contingency staffing between May 1, 2016 and December 31, 2016. Currently, there is a balance of \$1,234,833 in the Ontario Works Stabilization Reserve #110044.

**Staffing:**

The funding requested will support the continuation of 30 FTE staff positions until December 31, 2016.

**Legal:**

There are no legal implications associated with the recommendations of Report CS09021(f).

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

The OW Contingency Plan was developed and approved by City Council in response to the recession that started in approximately September 2008 when the caseload was 10,056. The caseload steadily increased to 14,166 in July 2011.

In November 2011, Report CS09021(c) was presented and approved by City Council. The General Manager of Community and Emergency Services was authorized to implement Phase 3 of the OW Caseload Contingency Plan. The additional staff were to be retained until the caseload decreased below 10,000 and/or the average caseload to staff ratio was 120:1.

In July 2013, Council approved Report CS09021(d) which requested authorization to maintain the 30 Full Time Employees hired for Phases 2 and 3 of the Ontario Works Caseload Contingency Plan until April 2015.

In 2014, the General Manager of Community and Emergency Services initiated the planning for an organizational review. One of the reasons for the review was that the OW caseload average of 12,456 in 2014 was approximately 2,500 cases above pre-recession levels, and the OW Stabilization Reserve was not sustainable source of funding for the additional contingency staff. .

The new Social Assistance Management System (SAMS) was implemented in November 2014. It was apparent within the first weeks of the implementation of SAMS that a crisis situation had developed creating challenges for OW staff and clients. In order to avoid further disruption in service delivery and to allow time for stabilization and

recovery along with time to complete the OW Organizational Review it was recommended that the current staff levels be retained. Report CS09021(e) was presented and approved by City Council, which allowed staffing levels to continue until April 30, 2016. Since the recommendations of the review have not been finalized nor presented to Emergency and Community Services Committee, it is recommended that the current staffing levels remain until December 31, 2016.

## **POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS**

City of Hamilton, Budget Control Policy, Budgeted Complement Control Policy  
2(ii) Temporary complement for a duration of eighteen months or longer, requires Council approval.

## **RELEVANT CONSULTATION**

Finance and Administration, Corporate Services Department provided details regarding the funding options and financial implications. They are in agreement with the proposed funding sources recommended in this report.

## **ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION**

The recommendation to maintain the temporary staffing levels is made for the following reasons:

- The caseload size is still above pre-recession levels. While the number of cases has declined from the peak of over 14,000 cases, the average caseload in 2015 was 12,688 is still approximately 2,700 cases above pre-recession levels.
- Any reductions in staff at this time would further disrupt service delivery as staff continues to deal with the SAMS recovery plan. It is expected that returning to business-as-usual may not occur until the end of 2016.
- Until the final report on the operational review is presented it would be premature to make changes to staffing levels.

## **ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION**

None

## **ALIGNMENT TO THE 2012 – 2015 STRATEGIC PLAN**

### **Strategic Priority #2**

Valued & Sustainable Services

*WE deliver high quality services that meet citizen needs and expectations, in a cost effective and responsible manner.*

### **Strategic Objective**

2.3 Enhance customer service satisfaction.

**APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED**

None.